

BERNICE MIREKU-NORTH, ESQ.
Legislative District 14
Montgomery County

Ways and Means Committee

Chair

Child Care Subcommittee

Early Childhood and
Special Education Subcommittee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 222
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3539
800-492-7122 Ext. 3539
Bernice.Mireku-North@house.maryland.gov

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 978: General Assembly - Home Security System
Expenses - Campaign Funds and Reimbursement
February 25, 2026**

Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and esteemed members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee, I come before you today to offer testimony in favor of **House Bill 978: General Assembly - Home Security System Expenses - Campaign Funds and Reimbursement**.

Across Maryland and throughout the country, elected officials are facing a troubling rise in threats and harassment directly tied to their public service. These threats often extend to spouses, children, and loved ones. According to recent national reporting, more than 40% of state legislators have experienced threats or attacks in recent years.¹ In 2025, Melissa Hortman, Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives, and her husband were brutally murdered in their home. That same gunman attacked a member of the Minnesota Senate and his wife, who fortunately survived. These tragedies underscore the very real risks public servants now face.

At the federal level, there is recognition that these threats require practical solutions. Federal candidates are permitted to use campaign funds for security expenses, and members of Congress receive a monthly stipend that may be used for security measures to protect their homes and families. State lawmakers, however, often face the same dangers without access to comparable tools.

¹ Brennan Center for Justice, *Intimidation of State and Local Officeholders: The Threat to Democracy* (Jan. 25, 2024)

Under current Maryland law, expenditures for home security systems, alarm monitoring, and related protective measures can be interpreted as prohibited personal use of campaign funds. As a result, members of the General Assembly are discouraged from taking reasonable steps to protect themselves and their families, or they must personally absorb those costs.

House Bill 978 offers a modest and responsible solution. The bill would allow members of the General Assembly to use up to \$1,000 in campaign funds to defray the cost of home security expenses at their primary residence. It would also provide reimbursement—up to \$1,000 during a member’s term—for those who have used personal funds to install security measures.

Maryland would not be alone in taking this step. States including California, Louisiana, Minnesota, Illinois, and South Dakota explicitly permit candidates and officeholders to use campaign funds for security and alarm system expenses for themselves and their immediate family members. Federal candidates may do the same.

Public service should never require someone to choose between serving their constituents and protecting their family. House Bill 978 ensures that members can take reasonable, limited steps to safeguard their homes without violating campaign finance rules or bearing undue personal financial burden. For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 978.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernice Mireku-North". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Honorable Bernice Mireku-North, Esq.
Delegate. Maryland Legislative District 14
Maryland House of Delegates